Fellowship in Prayer

"For a World United in Prayer"

Out of the crucible of spiritual pondering and poignant experience rises the flame of prayer that mounts upward to the Highest.

— Francis Merchant

ıme XVI **DECEMBER 1965** Number 6

OUR PURPOSE

To promote the practice of prayer among ALL religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

22 East 29th Street New York 16, N.Y.

Volume XVI December 1965 Number 6

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Now that we are about to embark upon the uncharted sea of a New Year, to me there is nothing quite so important as the awareness of our individual responsibility to our fellow men. World improvement depends upon and must begin with individual improvement.

Everything in this life has its price. The price of peace is sacrifice. It we are willing to pay the price, we can have peace; if we are unwilling to make the necessary sacrifices, then we cannot hope for peace.

World peace must begin in the heart of the individual. To talk peace while the flame of hate burns in our hearts is a mockery and a delusion. The heart that harbors hate is the breeding ground of war; the heart that is filled with love for all men is the cradle of brotherhood. Love is the only power which can extinguish this flame of hate and bring peace to the world. Until we learn to "love our neighbor as ourself," "peace on earth, good-will toward men" will continue to be just an unrealized dream, an unfulfilled hope.

If we could make altruism our guiding star throughout our lives, it would lead us into the glorious fulfillment of those things which are nearest and dearest to the hearts of all peace-loving people: Unity, freedom, harmony, brotherhood, peace and happiness.

"Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God."

— Harry Halsey Starrett

EDITORIAL

OUTSTRETCHED HANDS

THE YEAR now ending has been momentous in many ways, not least of all in the area of developments and accomplishments on the religious scene.

While it is not possible, or intended, to recount or place in any order of importance the happenings of 1965, some events of deep spiritual significance deserve emphasis.

On the following pages of this issue we carry the text of the Second Vatican Council's now-promulgated schema on relations of the Roman Catholic Church to non-Christian religions. We feel that this document, while prepared by but one religious body and written from that viewpoint, stands also as an expression worthy of praise from men of all religions. It is a fruitful culmination of the desires stated by the late, venerated Pope John XXIII when he called for an "opening of the window of Catholicism. As a result of this openness, doors and windows in many other quarters have been opened; men long alienated are talking together; distrust—even animosity—is gradually being replaced by amity and understanding. Can there be a doubt that in this amazing transition, this monumental change seen over such a short period of time, God's guidance has not been provided?

It should, of course, be pointed out that while the Vatican II statement on other religions has been justifiably hailed as an important stimulus to new understanding, it also has shortcomings. If a consensus can be determined, it is that revision of the latter portions—relating to Christian attitudes toward Jews—noticeably weakened the strong statement put forth by the most progressive of the Catholic ecumenical spokesmen. At the same time—and numerous Jewish representatives agree—the basic strength and intent remains. The fact that one Church of some five

hundred million souls records its belief that all Jews over the centuries cannot be held in guilt for the crucifixion of Christ certainly is destined to go far toward erasing the evil of anti-Semitism. In its place, one can expect an acceleration of interreligious dialogue that can only extend this new era of love among men.

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WHILE THE Second Vatican Council, now ended after four years, is destined to go down in history as an event that engendered new hope for universal brotherhood, the Protestant and Jewish traditions and other great world religions have been not only receptive to the ecumenical spirit but have added their own leadership.

This year has seen the passing of one of Judaism's greatest philosophers, Professor Martin Buber. He died on June 13 at the age of eighty-seven in Jerusalem after being in failing health since a fall in April that broke his leg.

In addition to being the most renowned Jewish philosopher of his day, Professor Buber will be remembered as a thinker whose influence reached deep into all religious faiths, into all religion. At the core of his philosophy was a belief that man's search for an intimate relationship with God must take the course of an intimate interrelationship of man with man.

As 1965 is ending, religious thinkers are deep in discussion of what has been called the "God is dead" theology. Professor Buber's teachings come to light as this controversial contention is considered. Though discussed by some theologians for a considerable time, the current "God is dead" philosophers this fall attracted widespread attention as their views were publicized in mass periodicals.

There has been considerable confusion concerning the debatable theological position, but in essence it has been described as a claim that God is dead and that modern man is challenged in a secularized world to find spiritual meaning and values by means other than traditional religious forms. At the same time, Jesus Christ is held up as an ex-

ample of freedom, a "place to be" as man grapples with problems magnified by exploding population and rapidly advancing technology.

In addition to the outbursts of direct objection to the "death of God" theology, reaction has included comments that proponents of this view have raised a valid challenge: that the pace of the modern world demands reassessment of the bases of faith in an era of religious crisis.

Professor Buber, who stressed that love is the key to the question of existence and can open the path to divinity, perhaps also spoke to the "God is dead" theologians when he taught that it is possible for men to find God even as they believe they are denying Him. He said: "When he who abhors the name and believes himself to be godless, gives his whole being to addressing the Thou of his life, as a Thou that cannot be limited by another, he addresses God."

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THOUGH THE leadership of many individuals in the effort to break down religious barriers could be cited, particular mention should be made that 1965 is the last full year of service as general secretary of the World Council of Churches for Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, who has been hailed as the foremost pioneer of the ecumenical movement. It is indicative of the high esteem in which he is held that leaders of the World Council this year prevailed on the Dutch Reformed clergyman to remain in his post beyond the date of his intended retirement, last September on his sixty-fifth birthday.

As the choice of a successor is made in February, we should pray that those making the decision are given divine guidance and that the man named is similarly blessed in his endeavors.

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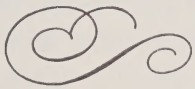
THERE IS no way to adequately recapitulate all events of a particular year. The end of a twelve-month season, however, is an appro-

priate time to reflect on past developments and look toward the future.

It can be seen that out of happenings as mentioned above, and in the lives and teachings of great religious leaders there exists today a spiritual awakening. Without minimizing the bloodshed, fear, hunger and injustice rampant in the world there is a discernible desire to overcome these evils. We do not believe that God is dead. We believe that His presence, if anything, is becoming all the more visible in the form of men reaching out toward each other—men of all races and religions. The outreach, perhaps, is tentative but hands are being extended in love and understanding. We pray that, more and more, they come into contact.



For me the different religions are beautiful flowers from the same garden, or they are branches of the same majestic tree. Therefore they are equally true, though being received and interpreted through human instruments equally imperfect.

— Gandhi

In the world in which we now find ourselves, the adherents of the different living religions ought to be the readier to tolerate, respect, and revere one another's religious heritages because, in our generation, there is not anyone alive who is effectively in a position to judge between his own religion and his neighbour's.

— Arnold J. Toynbee

SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL DECLARATION ON CATHOLICS AND NON-CHRISTIANS

In our time, when day by day mankind is being drawn closer together, and the ties between different peoples are becoming stronger, the Church examines more closely her relationship to non-Christian religions. In her task of promoting unity and love among men, indeed among nations, she considers above all in this declaration what men have in common and what draws them to fellowship.

One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth. One also is their final goal, God. His providence, His manifestations of goodness, His saving design extend to all men, until that time when the elect will be united in the Holy City, the city ablaze with the glory of God, where the nations will walk in His light.

Men expect from the various religions answers to the unsolved riddles of the human condition, which today, even as in former times, deeply stir the hearts of men: What is man? What is the meaning, the aim of our life? What is moral good, what sin? Whence suffering and what purpose does it serve? Which is the road to true happiness? What are death, judgment and retribution after death? What, finally, is that ultimate inexpressible mystery which encompasses our existence: whence do we come, and where are we going?

From ancient times down to the present, there is found among various peoples a certain perception of that hidden power which hovers over the course of things and over the events of human history; at times some indeed have come to the recognition of a Supreme Being, or even of a Father. This perception and recognition penetrates their lives with a profound religious sense.

Religions, however, that are bound up with an advanced culture have struggled to answer the same questions by means of more refined

concepts and a more developed language. Thus in Hinduism, men contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an inexhaustible abundance of myths and through searching philosophical inquiry. They seek freedom from the anguish of our human condition either through ascetical practices or profound meditation or a flight to God with love and trust. Again, Buddhism, in its various forms, realizes the radical insufficiency of this changeable world; it teaches a way by which men, in a devout and confident spirit, may be able either to acquire the state of perfect liberation, or attain by their own efforts or through higher help, supreme illumination. Likewise, other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing "ways," comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites.

The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim, Christ, "the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14 6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself.

The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the sociocultural values found among these men.

The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself, merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, his virgin mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of

judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this Sacred Synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.

As this Sacred Synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that spiritually ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock.

Thus, the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ—Abraham's sons according to faith—are included in the same Patriarch's call, and likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles. Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ Our Peace reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making both one in Himself.

The Church keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: "theirs is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the law and the worship and the promises; theirs are the fathers and from them is the Christ according to the flesh" (Rom. 9, 4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary. She also recalls that the Apostles, the Church's mainstay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people.

As Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the

time of her visitation, nor did the Jews, in large number, accept the Gospel; indeed not a few opposed its spreading. Nevertheless, God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their fathers; He does not repent of the gifts He makes or of the calls He issues—such is the witness of the Apostle. In company with the prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and "serve him shoulder to shoulder" (Soph. 3: 9).

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this Sacred Synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues.

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected by God or accursed, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecution, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.

Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.

We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly way any man, created as he is in the image of God.

Man's relation to God the Father and his relation to men his brothers are so linked together that Scripture says: "He who does not love does not not know God" (Jn. 4: 8).

No foundation therefore remains for any theory or practice that leads to discrimination between man and man or people and people, so far as their human dignity and the rights flowing from it are concerned.

The Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition in life, or religion. On the contrary, following in the footsteps of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, this Sacred Synod ardently implores the Christian faithful to "maintain good fellowship among the nations" (I Pet. 2: 12), and, if possible, to live for their part in peace with all men, so that they may truly be sons of the Father who is in heaven.

Hinduism tells every one to worship God according to his own faith, and so it lives at peace with all the religions.

— Gandhi

God has given us a world that nothing but our own folly keeps from being a paradise.

— G. Bernard Shaw

If you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy.

— Kahlil Gibran

THE COLOR OF CHRISTMAS

Berneice A. McCombs

As a child, did you ever play with the sunlight?

I remember how we would take apiece of glass and pass a beam of God's sunlight through it, the next instant observing the many rainbow colors on the opposite side of the glass. It delighted us and we wondered at its beauty.

Other times, we marveled at sunlight in the afternoon as it passed through a window onto a crystal chandelier, leaving the other side overflowing with colors. On a summer afternoon, when the water sprinkler was going, the same rainbow of colors would appear in the mist surrounding the water.

At the Christmas Season, man brings forth all colors to glorify Christ's birth. Windows of stores and shops are decorated brilliantly. At night the streets are filled with colored lights against the dark that has no color. Homes, both inside and out, have color that says: "Good will and peace to all men." In the shops, all toys, all gifts, and all decorations are gayly colored and they seem to blend together. There are no clashing of their shades. The silvers, the golds, the blues, and the reds and greens add a joyous feeling to the air around us. This indeed is a season for joy and love.

Let us imagine, on that special night so long ago, the shepherds watching their flocks in the stillness of the clear night. Suddenly there appeared an angel before them. The glory of God (in all of His whiteness) shone about them and the angel announced the birth of Jesus. The colors that the shepherds saw that night were the truest and purest in all of Nature. It must have been the brightness of color that frightened them. The colors blended into pure white, glorifying God and all of His greatness. The shepherds went in haste and found Jesus, and discovered this same pure white light surrounding Him. They fell down and worshiped Him. It would seem that God was telling man that He was and is the only pure white light of our world. Later they returned to their hillside and marveled at the things they had seen that night.

We take a beam of white light and pass it through a prism to be divided into a rainbow of colors. Next we can reverse this process and find again the white beam of sunlight. It seems man was meant to blend into this white light of God. There should be no clashing, or any disharmony of colors, or no lines to separate each color from the other. God seems to be saying that man should blend with Him. The color of Christmas brings a season of good-will and peace to all men. Let us become as children and play with the sunlight!

SENDING A SONG

In the beauty of the silence,
High on the Christmas hills,
Luminous over the rooftops,
A sudden glory spills,
Sending a song to your hungry heart,
A star to your storm-dark sky,
God's gift of His child for a promise
Of love that will never die.

— Alice Mackenzie Swaim

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

I do not know
the path that leads to Bethlehem;
Nor have I frankincense, or diadems
to offer Him. . .But from my heart I
pray to Him
for world-wide peace
For all mankind.

— Velta Myrle Allen

CHRISTMAS EVE IN CASA GRANDE

Clara Ullrich Samuels

Tonight in this secluded desert spot, it is quiet and peaceful. The moon, and oversize ball of luminous orange-gold, has risen in the east and follows its normal nocturnal path.

The timeless stars repeat their regular, slow-paced display of designs. But one, especially bright, attracts our arrested thought. We wonder, as time is mentally flashed back to the birth of our Christian heritage, of salvation and immortal life.

The mystery of silence is in the atmosphere. Unheard by the natural human ear, the air waves are filled with countless "hallelujahs" and promises of "peace on earth" and a facsimile of the nativity story.

In sight and hearing, they are within the reach of any modern shepherd (the humble in heart) or wise man (the learned one) who will, by self choice, "tune in" on these joyous sounds and scenes by the means of radio and television.

Normal physical ability is challenged by the awe of song and activity, upheld by the grace of God, in the upper atmosphere, wholly unaided by any mortal man's physical power.

The eyes perceive a realistic re-enactment of the angel's appearance. *The ears hear* the vital message and the joyous angelic chorus;

The shepherds' humble wonder;
The wisemen with thoughts profound;
The stable with its manger and animals;
The Christ child resting;
Mary, Joseph;
The Christmas star!

not in an actual physical state, but as *a captured vision—the spirit* of the actors made manifest in today's miraculous way.

Watch! Hear!
See! Believe!

PRAYING HANDS

Buddy Arnold

Prayer is more needed in this world than ever before. A dark cloud hovers over Asia, a cloud that could bring a terrible storm to the entire world.

We need a regiment of skilled, fine prayer warriors asking for the salvation, not for the destruction, of the enemy so that the Heavenly Father's will can be done.

Such a prayer could transform a nation and also a troubled world. It could perhaps bring the fulfillment of a promise made long ago to man. We are to have a thousand years of peace. The tools of war are to be made into channels of peace. The Lamb and the Lion shall lie down together. That is the promise, and God keeps His word.

Why isn't the promise fulfilled? For centuries man has fought war after war, to be the last war, and man is now fighting in India and Viet Nam. People suffer and die, and youths are growing old before their time, all because a few men want and cannot find agreement, and a few men lust for power and dominion. No, it doesn't make good sense, but it is the truth.

Man has to want peace. Man has to have love in his heart and soul. Man must fold his hands and pray. Man must stake his claim.

Our only link with God is prayer. Our generation needs to realize this fact, and learn how to pray. Learning to pray is simple. You do not even have to talk. Just sit quietly and let your inner man do the talking and all the work.

Because of my speech problems, I found this golden key. Such prayer is the purest form. Find out for yourself.

Sit down in a comfortable chair, or lie down on a comfortable bed, fold your hands, and just let go and let God. If you must speak, by all means do so, but first try to let the inner man do the work. I believe you will feel your prayer go into orbit. I know that I do and what a blessing I receive from my moment with God.

I was asked to pray for the

destruction of Red China the other day. This I cannot do. Communism is evil, and yet it seems to be helping China to pull herself up and out of the mud.

I believe the day is coming when communism will rid itself of its evil desires and ways. I believe that some day people will find a new method by which to govern themselves. I believe that the day is coming when all men will be free, and God will be found by all men.

For this, I pray, and through Christ and prayer, I stake my claim to this great promise, dream and brotherhood.

MEDITATION

The silent moment is a prayer
Of gratitude, I share
With God, for beauties of the earth
And life's eternal worth.

SILENCE

From a mystic place within the soul
A well of valiant silence springs;
And here in sweet peace calm and whole
Men find God, and life's wondrous things.

GREAT HEARTS

The greatest heart that ever beat
Was in some patient soul
That found day's common duties sweet,
And found God makes life whole.

LOOK UP

Lift your eyes to the heavens,
Into the light of God's grace;
And life will have a vision
Of a purpose and a place.

— Loreta Inman

RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Amitabha Guha, M.A., D. Ed.

No society can grow without a religion. It is religion that binds and unites the members of a society. In fact religion alone can establish cordial relations among a group of people. A religion that appeals to heart because it is based on reason will alone endure. A religion, with rituals and customary practices that appeals only to the senses but not to reason, may attract men for some time, but a time comes when thinking men with strong reasoning faculty reject it as superficial and follow reason in pursuit of the true spirit of religion. This is what happened in the Brahmo Samaj. The Brahmos of the past lay great emphasis on reason. Brahmoism is indeed a rational religion, a religion which has accepted the truth of all historical religions in the light of reason. The teachers of this religion have always tried to bring home to the public the truths of religion by appealing to reason.

But now the question arises how far Brahmoism has carried out its function properly. It is to be seen if the study of different scriptures and their recitation in a scholastic manner without getting into their true spirit constitutes religion. To the Brahmo, religion is a matter of spirit. Mere intellectual exercise of dogma is no religion but the understanding of its spirit and its application in life.

To a devotee of God, religion is his life and soul. He is not content with merely following the customary rites and formalities prescribed by the religious body. He feels the presence of God everywhere in the world as well as within himself. He feels he cannot escape a moment from the presence of God. So he surrenders himself entirely unto the Omniscient spirit and loses his own individuality in Him. Under the circumstances he cannot do anything that goes against the ideals of life he has visualized for himself. He forgets his own interest and his life brings home to the members of the society the high ideals he cherishes. Such a devotee of God cannot utter or preach what he does not feel at heart, or what he himself does not practice....

Simply by preaching the glory of an ideal religion we cannot con-

vince the world that we are on the right path. We should preach what we practice in life. We should act in such a way that people might feel that we are earnest in our thought and action. Whatever we do we should do for the glory of God. If people understand that we always care more for humanity than for our own self, that we are approaching the ideal preached by us, then they will believe us and follow us and do what we bid them do. If our religion be a living religion, it will inspire the people, and the society will then surely follow the path of religion and righteousness. Then there will be no conflict of interests, and the whole society will grow up in full harmony and sweet accord.

— From THE INDIAN MESSENGER

WHEN WE BELIEVE

When we believe, even though I know not how
God fills us with a daily Faith, and Hope.
Faith brings us this day, joy-filling,
Gladness inspired—
Creating HIS Goodness through all in Grace,
HIS outreaching.

Hope clothes us in HIS Kindliness, as we serve
Our brothers, black, white, brown or yellow.
HIS Word inspires us, when world trust outgiving
We become as Brothers, in a fellowship constant,
Truth in prayers, Love rooted...
When we believe!

— Alice Richmond

RECURRING MEDITATION

Francis Merchant

I AM A TENANT visiting the earth for a fleeting moment, even though it is called a lifetime. Of myself I can say little, for I am still unacquainted with what I truly am, and I am still trying to discover my divine identity. Science tells me of my animal heritage while theology informs me that I am directly related to God. Are both perhaps right?

With untold millions of human beings I share the experience of animating a fleshly tenement for an interim, and in common with them I am presented with the task of making my sojourn here meaningful.

I contemplate the lives of those who share with me the fate of being human, wondering how they respond to the challenge of earthly existence. Many of them, I note, consider not the brevity of their days and the inevitability of their departure, but fill their hours with trinkets and trivialities. Some seek power, others self-aggrandizement. What remains of all their fevered activity when they come—as come they must—to the ultimate gate of death? What treasures have they stored up during the experience of a lifetime? What have they gained from their experiences on this side of eternity? What insights, perceptions, thought

THIS ARTICLE is from a small booklet prepared by Dr. Merchant. His comments on the booklet are well worth sharing: "While I was on vacation last summer, I felt an inner urge to define for myself the meaning of my life, attempting to discover the significance of my sojourn in time and space. What did I seek to accomplish with the passing of the decades? As a result of many varied experiences—the blows of failure, the lash of pain, the experience of sacrifice—had I evolved a durable faith that could be tried and tested without crumbling? My ponderings led me to write "Confession of Faith." It sums up some of my groping answers to the problems involved in being a human being. It seems to me that it would be desirable for every human being—at some time during his lifetime—to set forth, if only for himself, what he has learned about the grand mystery of our transient existence on a whirling globe that travels for unwearying centuries about a central ball of fire. Out of the crucible of such pondering and such experience rises the flame of prayer that mounts upward to the Highest."

essences will they take with them beyond the terminal barrier of death?

With a measure of dispassion I study the two groups: the corruptors, charlatans, and exploiters; and then again, the idealists, visionaries, meliorists, and philanthropists. The first group manipulates human beings for selfish ends; the second often strikes too high a note and consequently secures no response.

I ask myself, *How long, O Lord, must human beings destroy each other, whether in war or in peace?*

HOW LONG must human lives be wasted on bubbles and trivialities?

HOW LONG must men and women be deceived by villains and mountebanks who are hailed as heroes and saviors?

HOW LONG must the sons of men behave like animals, debasing the diviner elements of their natures?

HOW LONG must the human race wander in the wasteland, gorging themselves on the fleshpots of Egypt?

HOW LONG must mankind stand idly in the darkness before remembering their heritage of divinity?

"Every one of us has his particular task in this world to fulfill. The course of our life and our reflection will let us know the proper way of serving which has been destined for us."

— Albert Schweitzer

Book Review

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP by Dietrich Bonhoeffer published by The Macmillan Co., New York; 1963 (paperback) $1.95.

The message is simple. But it has the shattering impact of a sledge hammer. If one were to accept this book at face value, to follow in the author's footsteps, the ramifications in our own lives around us would be, I believe, awesome.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a young German theologian who was martyred by the Nazis in 1945. In his book he examines the serious implications of believing in Christ, the intensity of the struggle between the world and God in man's deepest self whenever he takes upon himself true discipleship.

In the forward, the Bishop of Chichester writes: '"When Christ calls a man,' says Bonhoeffer, 'he bids him come and die.' There are different kinds of dying, it is true; but the essence of discipleship is contained in these words."

Bonhoeffer reiterates the thought in a slightly different way. "A Christian has no other choice but to act, to suffer and—if it has to be—to die."

He believed that too often religious institutions are an impediment to finding our way to Christ. "The real trouble is that the pure Word of Jesus has been overlaid with so much human ballast—burdensome rules and regulations, false hopes and consolations—that it has become extremely difficult to make a genuine decision for Christ." The book tries to answer the problem for us, and the cost of discipleship is carefully delineated.

Modern man has especially been waylaid by what he calls *cheap grace* (The condition of being influenced and favored by God) "Cheap grace—easy Christianity—is the deadly enemy of our Church. It means grace sold on the market like cheapjacks' wares. The sacraments, the forgiveness of sin and the consolations of religion are thrown away at cut prices. Grace is represented as the Church's inexhaustible treasure,

from which she showers blessings with generous hands, without asking questions or fixing limits. Grace without price; grace without cost.

"Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."

He points out that Christ did not intend that only a select few should follow Him. He intended that many should walk in his footsteps. And because Jesus is the Christ he has the authority to call and demand obedience to his word. We are not to follow him as a teacher or a pattern of the good life, but as the Christ, the son of God. There is no other road to Christian discipleship other than obedience to this call of Jesus. Without Christ, Christianity dissolves into a kind of myth, an abstract idea.

Bonhoeffer understood that we tend to intellectually analyze faith to death. Only the obedient can believe, he says. Therefore you must start with some external act, for by sitting and hoping and thinking you are not going to get a faith. You must act. Although Peter cannot achieve his own conversion, he can leave his nets.

"If you believe, take the first step, it leads to Jesus Christ. If you don't believe, take the first step all the same, for you are bidden to take it. No one wants to know about your faith or unbelief, your orders are to perform the act of obedience on spot. Then you will find yourself in the situation where faith becomes possible and where faith exists in the true sense of the word. You can only learn what obedience is by obeying. It is no use asking questions, for it is only through obedience that you come to learn the truth.

The discipleship is costly, but just as anything which is costly, it has its own intrinsic worth. As a disciple, one finds freedom, certainty, love. In a world seemingly without purpose, one finds purpose. It is that pearl for which we sell everything we have. With cheap discipleship, we get a cheap faith whose paint begins to run in the first rain and which begins to warp and fall apart all too quickly.

The book is divided into four major sections—Grace and Discipleship: The Sermon on the Mount: The

Messengers: The Church of Jesus Christ and the Life of Discipleship. It is a call to arms for all Christians in an embattled world. The book should be read and reread, marked and mulled over. Here are no sweet bouquets that wither and die. Here rather is that mustard seed that can take your faith and help it grow into a strong tree.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a living example of his faith. He had every opportunity to escape from Germany. In fact, for a time he lived in England. But he knew that his rightful place was opposing the evil in his own homeland. While in prison he was a source of comfort and cheer to prisoners and guards alike. Not everyone is called such as was he to give up his life, for he tells us that God will not try us beyond our capacity.

"He was a teacher and thinker whose truths were tested in a time of trouble and whose life and death certified to the strength and depth of his desire to follow Christ."

— Peter V. K. Funk

Lord God of the solitary. . .
Give me good work to do,
That I may forget myself and find peace in doing it for Thee.
Though I am poor, send me to carry some gift to those poorer,
Some cheer to those who are more lonely,
Grant me the joy to do a kindness to one of Thy little ones:
Light my Christmas candle at the gladness of an innocent and grateful heart.

— Henry Van Dyke
From THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS
By courtesy of Murray Young

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR LITTLE PEOPLE

Micah sprang from the common ones
To give not of his robe but from his heart.
Micah was minor in his song;
Minor prophet with a minor part.

He knes the intellect could strike
As symbols, loudly, leaving hollow sound;
Knew heart-sprung words could run
For-ever-more like roots along the ground;
Knew love could blossom flower
And beauty, like the vineyards, bear sweet wine
As long as stars of Orion
Continued in their seven-gloried shine.

Yet made as little noise
As the softest wings of birds;
This little prophet with
His little show of words.

Micah has seven chapters now
Of songs he sang—thoughts he dared to show—
Harmonies from his lyric heart
Poured forth for every one to read and know
"Shall beat their swords into plough-shares
And fashion spears to pruning hooks
Under vine and under fig tree"
Flows his melody in the Book of Books!

Make, then, as little noise
As the softest wings of birds
Oh little, little people with
Your little show of words!

— Carla Patsuris

THE SIMPLE HOW OF PRAYER

Eric Butterworth

Prayer is potentially the greatest source of power available to man. However, the word "prayer" is an abstraction. To tell a person to "pray about it" is often the same as saying, "fly to the moon." We need a technique by which our prayer may become effective. We cannot simply pray with words. The mind is the connecting link between God and man, thus prayer is a technique for reshaping our thoughts and attitudes, remolding our consciousness.

One of the oldest prayer techniques, and one never surpassed, is found in the 46th Psalm: *"Be still, and know that I am God."*

"BE STILL. . ." – this is the necessary preparation for prayer. When we are in trouble we are tense, anxious, fearful. We must relax, let go, and let God. We must stop running around, talking to people about our troubles, and talking to God about our troubles in emotionally disturbed prayers.

Prayer is not so much a position as a disposition. Some may get on their knees to pray, but, as Victor Hugo says, "There are times when the soul is on its knees whatever may be the attitude of the body." It may be more conducive to effective prayer to find a comfortable position where the body is relaxed. However, there must be a kneeling in spirit, the evoking of a disposition of humility.

If, in your prayer effort, you are tense, with hands clenched, and with the thought "it just has to work out, O God, do this or that!" then you are actually trying to storm the gates of heaven with your human will. Be still! Empty yourself of yourself! Let go, for "underneath are the everlasting arms."

"BE STILL AND KNOW. . ." Prayer is not asking, but knowing! When we "ask" for things, we express a very limited consciousness of God—God who *can* but who *does not* and who needs to be supplicated for his blessings. True, Jesus said, "And all things whatsoever ye shall ask

in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." However, the word "ask" has a different meaning when used generally than when used personally. To ask something of a person is to request or petition. But to ask something of life or of a law is to expose ourselves to the full action of life or the law. When someone has flouted the law and is punished, we say, "Well, he asked for it." He didn't ask in words, but he so acted as to make the result inevitable. In the impersonal sense to "ask" is to demand or claim. *"Concerning the work of my hands, command ye me" (Isaiah).* Thus to "ask" in prayer is to "claim our inheritance," to "know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free."

Prayer, then, is not "I wish," "I hope," or even "I pray," in the sense of wistfully reaching for some doubtful good. Prayer, in its effective use is I KNOW! Browning said, "To know, rather consists in opening out a way whence the imprisoned splendor may escape, than in effecting entry for a light supposed to be without."

"BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD." To many this is a difficult statement to make. It sounds sacrilegious, as if we are putting ourselves on a level with God. But it is really nothing of the kind. It means that there is only God, and that all else is the chimerical illusion of false belief. You cannot know that God is everywhere until you know that God is in you, that there is nothing *in* you but God expressing Himself *as* you. Be still and know the Truth, that you are a child of God, sustained and directed by perfect and limitless life, substance, and intelligence.

Here, then, is a simple prayer technique—the simple "how" of prayer. It is not so many words or so much time. It is simply a turning "in the twinkling of an eye" from the "fact" of limiting appearances, to the Truth of omnipresence. *"Be still . . . and know . . . that I am God."* It is a simple format that may work wonders for you if you use it diligently. With this technique you can "prayer-condition" your life so that you will not fear "though the earth do change."

— From CHALLENGE - bulletin of the
Unity Center of Practical Christianity, New York, N.Y.

THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

IT is frequently affirmed that "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." Is this true? This must depend entirely upon what we understand this statement to mean.

If on the one hand it means that the 'intake' of beauty is qualified by the scope of the beholder's 'eye' (perception) all well and good. If on the other hand it is meant that beauty is something which is quite arbitrary, this is demonstrably untrue.

The contention as to the arbitrary nature of beauty is put forward as an excuse for disregarding its real norms. It is based on the fact that two independent observers may define what they see as beautiful or ugly; from this it is argued that beauty is therefore entirely subjective to the individual, and possesses no real standards. Consequently, really beautiful works are readily scorned, and those lacking in beauty are put forward as exemplars, their justification resting upon the artist's or designer's own peculiar standard.

If this argument were based on truth, then beauty would resolve itself into merely a matter of *opinion*. But if it is merely opinion, what is meant by the term 'beauty'—and how can this term itself have meaning as an idea distinct from other ideas? In fact, why should we possess the word 'beauty', since this term would have no meaning?

If we consider this thoughtfully, it emerges that although standards of beauty may vary in each individual, each must nevertheless possess and apply a standard. And since beauty as an idea is comprehensible and acceptable from mind to mind, then there must be, in all these different standards, some common or universal element. This makes it distinct, intelligible, and acceptable to all. Developing this thought further, it becomes evident that each individual possesses this general or universal standard, but interprets it to his own requirements or within the limitations of his own viewpoint.

But can this standard be given satisfactory definition, without limiting either its universality or its adaptability to the needs of each?

Two useful propositions concerning the nature of Beauty have been put forward:

(1) That 'beauty' is the term applied to the idea of that which gives delight. This can be interpreted at various levels. At the lowest and most obvious level, there is physical delight at beautiful sense-impressions—whether of taste, touch, smell, sight, or hearing. At the higher end of the scale, delight can be translated into that deep joy which is experienced when we 'touch' what may be termed ideal or abstract beauty: the beauty of words, thoughts, ideas. At the highest point, delight becomes bliss, when we touch reality itself.

This definition is satisfactory at all levels, and allows for the vast variation in individual tastes, attitudes, and conceptions. Yet it will be noted that it is a definition of beauty in terms rather of what it does than of what it is, in itself.

(2) A definition which gets much closer to the nature of Beauty is that which refers to the perfection of structure and form—whether the 'form' be that which is sensibly touched or intellectually perceived: whether it is considered to be concrete, or abstract. Such definition refers us to the fullness of form, the harmony and symmetry of parts within the whole, and of the integration of that whole within other things.

Thus, if the form is perfect, the thing (whether an objective thing or an abstract idea) shows itself forth as beautiful, and exerts an appeal upon us. If the form is imperfect or deficient, the thing reveals itself as in varying degrees unbeautiful or ugly, or as the word indicates, de-formed.

The variations in the 'eye of the beholder' do not upset this universal standard of beauty. The explanation of difference in response is nearly always that the 'eye' is in each case applying this same standard but perceiving something *different*. This may appear to be a complex

matter, and it is accordingly best illustrated by a very simple example.

A suitable one would be the common daffodil. If the daffodil is perfectly formed, most observers would affirm that it is beautiful. Some however might claim that it is not. But the latter, one would discover, are not considering the daffodil in terms of itself but in terms of something *else*. They might, for instance, have a great love for roses. Accordingly, the daffodil by comparison could seem unbeautiful. But really, this amounts to the idea: "the daffodil is not a beautiful rose."

If the daffodil is imperfectly formed, most observers would affirm that it is not beautiful. Some however would claim that it is. But again, this would be because the imperfect daffodil is being judged in terms of something other than itself. The colour yellow might exert great appeal, for example, and the conclusion would really amount to the idea "the daffodil exhibits yellow beautifully."

From this emerges the important truth that the standard of beauty is the perfection of form of what a thing *should be* (or allowing for our own limitations and misconceptions, what we *think* a thing should be) furthermore, it becomes clear that to develop our own standards of beauty, we must seek to know what it really is that we are observing. Perhaps then the innate beauty which rests in all things may exert an appeal upon us, and we will respond to that appeal, and overcome the limitations of the 'eye of the beholder'.

It is true that no purpose is served by entering into a critical examination of every one of our own reactions to beauty, to try to determine whether we are correct or incorrect in our judgment. For the essence of beauty is that the reaction to its appeals is spontaneous. On the other hand, it is helpful, in the clarification of our own thoughts, and in the raising of our own standards of perception, to try to establish a reliable basis. Moreover, this may help us to contest some of the claims put forward for hideous works of art and architecture. Clearly, art in order to be art, must be characterised by beauty, and will also have a wide or narrow appeal according to the extent that the artist has endeavoured to satisfy the true standards of beauty.

Beauty is a 'showing-forth' or revelation' of form. But ideally, this revelation is really of the *goodness* of the essential nature of that form. This revelation exerts an appeal; in turn this appeal prompts us to find out what the 'thing' is. With beauty is also associated the idea of radiance, for around all beautiful things is a radiance whether this be of things, of people, of ideas. We refer frequently to a 'radiantly beautiful woman,' to the 'beam of happiness,' the 'glow of warmth.' These ideas are exemplified in the cosmos, in the splendour of the sunset and the starry heavens. In its most exalted and most perfect sense, we interpret radiance as Glory, and this we reserve for our conception of that which is Most High.

All these thoughts and terms give emphasis to the basic idea that beauty is closely allied with inner perfection; that goodness of essence implies harmony of structure; that harmony implies symmetry; that symmetry gives forth radiance. Thus it is that all things, in fulfilling their purpose are of necessity good, and in being good, they are beautiful.

—From VERITY

MY WISH

I only hope that I may live
As long as I have love to give
A path that I may trod
And share with others
My faith in God.

— Ellen Martin

ON BEING NEUTRAL

H. Richard Rasmusson

In one of Aesop's fables there is a story of the birds and the beasts preparing for conflict. Each side approached the bats to join them. To the birds the bats said, "I am a beast." To the beasts the bats said, "I am a bird." At the last moment peace was declared and a celebration was held. When the bats tried to join the birds they were rejected and also when they tried to join the beasts. The bats concluded: "He that is neither one thing nor the other has no friends."

Neutrality is being neither one thing nor the other. A text for this article could be: "How I wish you were either hot or cold! But because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth."

* * *

Neutrality is the biggest temptation of man. Not many are tempted to be outright antisocial or criminal or immoral. But how often we are tempted in the face of many situations to do nothing. Some of us don't cheat, but are indifferent or neutral regarding another's dishonesty.

What was the sin of the priest and Levite in the parable of the parable of the Good Samaritan? They passed by on the other side. They refused to become involved. They neither kicked the wounded man nor helped him. They did nothing. They were neutral.

Once a boy trudged many miles to hear William Jennings Bryan when he was running for the presidency speak at a whistle stop. The lad was wearing a McKinley button. When he reached out to shake Bryan's hand, the latter seeing the button smiled and said, "That's all right, son. The important thing is to be for somebody."

One is reminded of the challenge of Elijah to King Ahab, "How long will you halt between two opinions. If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."

* * *

Neutrality is the sin of many in the academic community. It wears the guise of objectivity. This is god for some. It is a form of idolatry.

The effort to see all sides of controversial issues is the mark of good teaching and scholarship. But does it follow that a teacher must never declare himself? Must professors always be fence-straddlers? Must they never take a stand for anything?

In a world where choices are deciding the future, the academic person should be in there with his choices weighing the decisions he believes are right. The scholar who says, "Some say this," "some say that," and forever hangs in the balance, renders himself useless for living. The open mind is a virtue to be cultivated. But if it never closes on something, what is the virtue of open-mindedness?

* * *

Many in our culture are sick in heart, full of cynicism and anxiety, because they are neutral and uncommitted. We are not made for neutrality. Taking no sides we become sick. We lose our lives by trying to save them by neutrality. John Dewey wrote, "Men are formed to act rather than to theorize."

Robert Kennedy, in his foreward to a new edition of his brother's *Profiles in Courage*, said that John F. Kennedy was fond of quoting Dante that "the hottest places in hell are reserved for those who, in a time of great moral crisis, maintain their neutrality."

* * *

In the deepest sense there is no neutrality. When one decides not to commit, we have already committed ourselves. We have committed ourselves not to commit ourselves.

A dowager, who when approached by a pollster on her politics, said, "I never vote; it's a great relief not to feel responsible for what goes on in Washington." But she was responsible, deny it how she will.

Neutrality is a false vision. By not deciding we do decide. We decide by default.

Dr. Fosdick tells about a man who was rowing down the Niagara River to Buffalo. He could not make up his mind whether to get off at Buffalo or not. He couldn't make up his mind; he was for it, then against it. But before long he realized the river had decided for him and he was carried past Buffalo. He had decided by indecision. Life decided where he couldn't or wouldn't.

So it is with the many problems of life. We dodge them, we refuse to face them squarely and decide. But in the meantime, while we are playing at being neutral, life itself decides.

"I know all your wars; you are neither hot nor cold. How I wish you were either hot or cold! But because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth."

WHERE?

When war strikes,
All help each other
Within their nation
Or neighborhood.
Threat of violence
Somehow brings
A brotherhood.
Yet, now, faced
With the greatest battle....
That of Good and Evil....
Where is our Unity?

— Florence Beck Unangst

NOTICES and COMMENTS

SPECIAL PROJECT. A special meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on October twenty-six with a main item of business being the consideration of a project suggested by Miss Anna Grace Sawyer of Forest Park, Illinois. This good friend, who has generously provided funds to launch the project, proposed that special efforts be made to introduce our work and the bimonthly to a large number of ministers and religious leaders around the world. At the present time, plans are being made to contact key churchman in various areas, providing them with a letter urging support of the mutual effort to promote prayer and copies of the bimonthly, including the fifteenth anniversary issue.

It is apparent that to carry out this project—which could well have marvelous results—the advice and assistance of all friends of the Fellowship is needed. Many persons who have repeatedly stressed their desire to advance our work will be called on to provide the names of church and spiritual leaders in their communities. We also pray that many others will volunteer as soon as possible to join in the effort.

In connection with the project, an emphasis will be placed on the means of promoting prayer through not only individual practice such as silent daily prayers, but through prayer groups or circles. Many such groups are in existence—and we would like to be put in contact with them—and many, many more could be formed. Fellowship in Prayer, we are confident, can be a source of great spiritual encouragement in this area. Are you a member of such a group, or do you know of one in your community? We would like to know.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS. An increasing number of readers of Fellowship in Prayer have found the bimonthly to be a most suitable gift for friends on a variety of occasions. We would like to suggest that this Christmas season is a particularly appropriate time to use gift subscriptions to complete or augment your shopping lists. It is gratifying to know, as we seek to continue to serve in stimulating prayer, that many of our most faithful supporters are those who have become acquainted with our work through the thoughtfulness of others.

BOOKS BY CONTRIBUTORS. It is a pleasure to announce the publication of books by two of the fellowship's faithful contributing writers, Aarno Davidson of Sunland, California, and Buddy Arnold of Hartley, Iowa. Mr. Davidson's *Whirling Leaves,* published by Olympic Press of New York City, is a volume of more than 200 of his poems, and also includes a section of epigrams and haikus (a Japanese form of poetry). It is the culmination of years of vision and revision, the author states. A first edition of *Fresh Water,* published by Mr. Arnold, has been well received, he reports. The book—a compilation of meditations and personal insights—is described by the author as aimed at suggesting "ways to go deeper into your faith and how to have a more abundant life."

POEM SET TO MUSIC. Material that appears in *FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER* frequently is re-published in many other publications. We are gratified (and suggest that young writers please note) that our bimonthly is highly respected by writers of both prose and poetry, though our circulation is not yet as large as we desire. It is a pleasure to call to attention the unique use made of a poem by Mrs. Minnie L. Keen of Westmont, New Jersey, who at the age of eighty-five retains her health and great spiritual strength. The poem, "My Garden," was set to music by Miss Edna Frida Pietsch and with our permission was published by her in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in a book of "Songs of Nature." We have heard the musical version and find it delightful and impressive.

GRADUATION GIFTS. The thoughtfulness that has earned friends around the world for Harry Halsey Starrett, our loyal Contributing Editor and Advisor from Lima, Ohio, was evident at graduation ceremonies for nurses at the Lima Hospital. The special Ideals Publishing Company booklet, "To the Graduate," was given by Mr. Starrett to each member of the graduating class. The booklet contains one of his provocative and inspirational essays on graduation.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES. FIP is published six times a year at the rate of $3.00. Special rates are available for additional copies.

////// IN MEMORIAM //////

We have been saddened to learn of the deaths of two long-standing friends and supporters of Fellowship in Prayer.

EVELYN C. GILES (Mrs. Howard Giles) of South Woodstock, Vermont, was a loyal worker for the Fellowship and from its earliest days her counsel and prayers were a source of great comfort and encouragement. This was especially true during the trying days of the illness and death of the founder and first executive secretary, Carl A. Evans.

In one of her many communications, Mrs. Giles wrote: "I particularly like the idea of joining with any truly spiritual forces of all faiths. It seems to me there are only two great divisions today. Those who believe in and adhere to material values, and those who prize and seek to further the spiritual ones. May your faithful adherence to the latter bring continued help to the world."

At her departure from this world, Mrs. Giles once again expressed her faith and trust in the endeavors of the Fellowship. Though not a woman of great means, she specified in her Last Will and Testament that a bequest be left to the organization. This act was a parallel gesture to that of Mr. Evans, whose example was substantiation for his hope that one of the financial sources of our work might come from such bequests from friends who believe in prayer and approve of our purpose.

MISS RITA BARNETT of New York showed her deep support for our humble organization not only through prayer but by physical labor. For two years she volunteered her services, cheerfully assisting in the office at many of the necessary, if routine, tasks such as addressing envelopes for the mailing of this bimonthly.

Miss Barnett was born November 16, 1883, in New York City. She was a graduate of Kells Business College and for many years lived in White Plains. When a companion passed away she sold her home and for the last twenty-five years lived at the Wentworth Hotel in New York City.

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WISE MEN OF THE FIELDS

The shepherds wondered why the guiding light
Shone all around and in them like the sea
Above the firmament. It seemed to be
An easier road to travel through the night
In search of Him whose name the years would write
On hills of hope (even in Galilee,
Dwarfed and despised, poor earth's extremity)
In golden letters glorious to the sight.

They did not with their Lord on missions go
To help him heal in temple and in town
And meet with multitudes eager to know
The taste of food from heaven coming down...
The wise men of the fields went home and then
Fed their elated flocks and straying men.

— William Walter DeBolt

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